

Opening Statement

Rep. Bart Gordon (D-TN)
Ranking Member, U.S. House Committee on Science

Full Committee Mark-Up: H.Res. 515

November 9, 2005

Thank you, Mr. Chairman for scheduling this meeting on House Resolution 515. Anyone who has spent time with you on the Science Committee knows you have a sincere interest in the issue of climate change. You have always addressed this issue in a thoughtful, serious, bipartisan fashion.

In general, our Committee has demonstrated bipartisan support for a wide variety of climate science and energy research programs at many of the agencies in our jurisdiction.

Like you, I believe we need strong science programs and solid analysis to assess the magnitude and possible impacts of a shift in the earth's climate. Good information is an essential ingredient in the development of good policy.

I believe you would agree it is not enough to fund strong science programs. It is not enough to produce scientific results and analyses.

To stimulate debate and craft good policy, information must be made public.

Unfortunately, this Administration – at times – has not regarded the Congress and the public as true partners in crafting the policy directions for this country.

Let's face it – sharing information with Congress and the public has not been this Administration's strong suit. Individual Members' and Committees' requests for information have not received the serious attention and responses that we must have to fulfill our responsibility to oversee the programs and policies we authorize.

As a result, some Members are resorting to introducing Resolutions of Inquiry to send a message to the Administration.

The message is simply this: Respond to our requests and provide the Congress with the information and analyses we require to serve our constituents. We want solid, unbiased factual information, not selective information that has been manipulated to serve a narrow political interest.

Whether we are talking about climate change or the cost of a Medicare prescription drug plan, Congress must have good information.

Mr. Chairman, we all know this Resolution will not go any further than this Committee meeting today. However, I am supporting the Resolution to send a message to the Administration.

I do not want to dwell on past mistakes, but I think we should learn from them.

I hope the Administration will, in the future, cooperate with the Congress and provide information in a timely fashion. We must work together to face our nation's challenges and develop clear policies to address them.

I want to work with you and the Administration to ensure we give the American people the good public policy they deserve.